





# CANADIAN COAST GUARD—INSHORE RESCUE BOATS

Every summer since 1972, the Canadian Coast Guard strengthens its search and rescue capabilities on the west coast with a number of inshore rescue boats. These highly manoeuvrable vessels provide search and rescue coverage in areas of high vessel concentrations between June and September. Approximately 25% of the marine distress calls received at the Rescue Coordination Centre in Victoria during these months are handled by the inshore rescue boats.

Initially introduced to provide short-range daylight rescue coverage, the inshore rescue boat program has evolved to a twenty-four hour all-weather longer range service in five areas of the British Columbia coast.

Each inshore rescue boat is operated by two, three-man crews who work either one or two week rotating shifts. The crews are composed of two student seamen and a regular Coast Guard seaman as acting coxswain. They work a regular eight hour day and are on standby the remaining 16 hours.

Each of the crew, many of whom are returning university students, undertake Canadian Coast Guard courses and on-the-job training in boating safety and search and rescue procedures. They must hold first aid qualifications, a swimming or diving certificate and a restricted radio licence to be eligible for the position.

The inshore rescue boats are British-built Avon Searider rigid-hull inflatables. These 5.5m vessels have a fibreglass deep "V" hull with conventional inflatable rubber tubes attached. Flexible rubber sides allow them to go alongside other craft without sustaining or causing damage. People can be picked up out of the water with a minimum of difficulty and without inflicting injury, due to the rubber sides and low freeboard.

The inshore rescue boats are powered by two 50 hp engines and run at a top speed of 35 knots. They have a six hour range at moderate speeds.

Distress frequencies on VHF and CB radios are monitored while the crew is on shift or on patrol. Other search and rescue equipment includes a fire pump; a folding stretcher; first aid equipment including oxygen; and a 300,000 candle-power searchlight. The inshore rescue boats are capable of towing small vessels.

The crews of the vessels are involved in Coast Guard boating safety and education programs aimed at reducing the number of search and rescue incidents. Only a small number of the marine search and rescue calls on the west coast are true distress situations where life or property is in immediate danger. Broken down, out of gas,

## 5.5m INSHORE RESCUE BOATS

- 501 Ogden Point, Victoria
- 503 Silva Bay, Gabriola Island
- 505 Garden Bay, Pender Harbour
- 507 Municipal Wharf, Port McNeill
- 509 Cortes Bay, Cortes Island

## Canadian Coast Guard Search and Rescue Vessels

NAME	TYPE	LENGTH	BASE
GEORGE E. DARBY	600 Class Cutter	56m	Prince Rupert/Victoria
RIDER	R Class Cutter	29m	Vancouver
RACER	R Class Cutter	29m	Victoria
READY	R Class Cutter	29m	Victoria
CG 123	400 Class Cutter	21m	Prince Rupert
CG 125	400 Class Cutter	21m	Campbell River
CG 122	Launch	13.2m	Ganges
CG 106	Lifeboat	13.4m	Bull Harbour
CG 105	Lifeboat	13.4m	Tofino
CG 104	Lifeboat	13.4m	Bamfield
SWIFT	Launch	8m	Kitsilano
MOORHEN	Launch	12.2m	Kitsilano
RELITE	Launch	12m	Powell River
CG 021	SRN5 Hovercraft	11.8m	Vancouver
CG 039	SRN6 Hovercraft	14.7m	Vancouver
CG 045	SRN6 Hovercraft	14.7m	Vancouver/Parksville

overdue and false alarms account for the great majority of the calls for help. Such incidents place an extraordinarily heavy demand on the search and rescue system. Search and rescue vessels may be diverted from a true distress situation to answer similar non-emergency calls.

Pleasure boaters can call on the inshore rescue boats for a courtesy examination. The examinations determine whether or not the vessels carry the required safety equipment. Decals are issued if a vessel passes the courtesy examination. Similar examinations are available upon request for small fishing vessels (under 15 tons).

This summer, the inshore rescue boats will operate in five areas. One boat has been assigned to Desolation Sound and will operate from Cortes Island. A second boat is based at Port McNeill, at the northern end of Vancouver Island, covering the Queen Charlotte Strait as far north as Port Hardy. These locations are new ones, where increasing pleasure craft and fishing vessel activity warranted the additional search and rescue coverage.

Victoria, Gabriola Island and Pender Harbour are repeat locations, with continuing high incident totals requiring the added summer coverage by the highly manoeuvrable craft.

Regular Coast Guard units, the inshore rescue boats, volunteer organizations such as the Canadian Marine Rescue Auxiliary and the Provincial Emergency Program and individual volunteers all work closely through the Rescue Coordination Centre in Victoria, providing a timely response to boaters in difficulty in British Columbia coastal waters.

For further information contact:

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